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E-Zine Does It
Toni Kervina
1 July 2008
For Professor Jane Denning

*Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science in
Publishing degree at Pace University*

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Introduction

In just the past decade, the face of publishing as we know it has changed so dramatically, it is barely recognizable. Books and newspapers have not changed much in their history up until the digital revolution, but magazines have undergone an unprecedented facelift. From their humble beginnings some three hundred years ago, magazines have evolved moreso than their cousin media. As of 2007, there were a recorded 19,532 magazine titles in publication (ASME), but the rise of the online counterpart, the ezine, has been swift. It is hard to determine the exact number of existing ezines since they do not have to comply with the stringent stipulations of print, and anyone can start one much like a blog. Yet, estimates range upwards of 10,000 ezines circulating the web, although there may be twice as many uncounted for. Covering any possible topic imaginable, ezines have been able to pinpoint minute niche audiences online where print magazines have struggled. Because of printing costs, print magazines need a certain amount of reader interest to sustain itself, whereas a free online magazine can survive with less than ten readers. There are even ezines about tips for running a successful ezine. In recent years, the print magazine has faltered due to rising production costs and an unsteady economic climate, but they continue to fight the good fight.

This paper will look at the current state of magazines, with a concentrated focus on new media. It will consider Juli B as a case study in one of a growing number of online magazines. Through my experience working there as an editorial intern and writer,

I gained an insight into the world of internet media. As the technology improves, more and more publishers are turning to the web as another outlet of disseminating information. The competition between print and online media may one day lead to a world without print magazines, unless the two can learn to coexist successfully. Until then, it is interesting to look how these new media evolve, and the birth and heyday of the ezine as a new breed unto itself.

The Online Phenomenon

For the print magazine, many say this is the beginning of the end, a slow death rattle in the history of technology. As society turns to the internet for information and entertainment, so too follow the publications who must compete for the same audience. Thus, there has been an exponential explosion in the number of online magazines and advertising. Most major publications have an online version of their print magazine, like *Oprah* and *Vogue*, while there are some stand-alone online magazines. Yet, even this shift is not enough. Publishers must do more to compete in the digital arena. *Time* is redesigning its site to focus on breaking news and blogs; *People* will be adding a celebrity database; *Sports Illustrated* will include a buying guide (Ives, AdAge).

In the changing technological landscape, news magazines have been hit the hardest in terms of the speed of information being disseminated. Entertainment is a sector which does not require the same degree of timeliness, but news magazines, with their up-to-the-minute coverage, are finding it more and more difficult to compete with online news media which can be even more timely. Why would anyone buy a weekly news magazine when someone can go online and read what has happened worldwide over the past two minutes. However, this is not to say that online media is the publisher's panacea.

Like most anything, there are positives and negatives to the online trend. There is also the continuing debate on whether print publications will even be able to survive the internet storm, or whether, like parchment and typewriters, print will disappear, and no one will miss it. The thing is, whether for good or bad, new media is here to stay, and the best way for different media to coexist is integration and cooperation.

The Advantages of Going Online

There are a number of benefits to online publishing that can make the digital conversion necessary. On the most obvious level, magazine websites have the capacity to carry much more material than their print counterparts as well as reach a wider audience. For example, on the *washingtonpost.com* website, users can watch related documentaries, chat online with reporters, and even watch time-elapsed photography (knowledge@wharton). Magazine features, although longer than those in newspapers, can be seen then as a good jumping off point. If a reader is particularly interested in one topic or story in the print version, he/she can hop online and find more in-depth information on the subject, as well as resources for even further perusal. For example, as mentioned with *Vogue*, a story that is repeated on the website can also include links to the designer or clothing brand, where it can be purchased, other stories written by the same staff writer, and so on.

This is not to say that a magazine website simply repackages printed material to a digital platform. Online media, like the *washingtonpost.com* have won a number of awards for original reporting (knowledge@wharton). Thus, while the two platforms may be intricately connected, the one does not necessarily rely on the other. Many of these online magazines that act as supplementary material to the print version can actually

stand on their own in terms of content. For example, one does not need to be a subscriber to *O Magazine* to be able to fully enjoy the website of the same name.

Being able to stand alone has been shown in recent times to be of more importance than anticipated. When *Jane* magazine folded in 2007, its website also ceased to exist. Another Conde Nast title, *House & Garden* folded just this past summer, and its website also followed suit.

Yet there are magazines whose online version has remained intact even after the shuttering of the print version. For example, *Nick Jr.*, which folded in February, has maintained its website. Not only has the website survived, it has thrived, with over 3 million unique visitors to the site in the following six months (Stableford, Folio). *Child.com*, *Cracked.com*, and *Stuff Magazine* have seen comparable increases online. Thus, magazine sites are useful, even as a backup if the print magazine fails. It also attests to the sites' stand-alone power.

Finally, as the technology improves, reading magazines online will become a more familiar experience. No computer will ever be able to duplicate the sensation of curling up with one's favorite title, nor will computers be able to duplicate the pass-along factor that print has, but as models improve, screens will become better quality (Penenberg, Mediapost), and reading online will grow closer to the real thing. At the forefront of the new e-readers is the Amazon Kindle, which costs around \$350. The wireless device has a six inch screen and holds 256MB of internal storage (or about 200 titles), and weighs in at just 10.3 ounces (Amazon).

Cost is of course the main drive of any new business endeavor, and online capitalism is no different. When digitizing a magazine, there are ways to cut costs that no

print magazine can compete with. In general, the growth of the online sector is making up for a decline in print revenue. Penton Media, for one, made about \$100,000 more online in 2005 than it lost in print sales over the first quarter of the year (Kinsman, Folio).

The decline in print sales reflects a number of causes. For example, in ad sales alone, numbers were down 8.3% in 2007 from what they were in 2006, a 10-year low (Newsosaur). Newsstand sales have been creeping up in the past few years due to a drop in print readership but also because of a hike in production costs. Paper is a major cost of print magazines and one area that online magazines can altogether avoid. In this way, the internet is more environmentally friendly. As the population and demand for paper products continues to grow, forests and thus the paper supply continue to shrink. Not only is this devastating in a global sense, but the price of paper will eventually become exorbitant, much like the rising price of oil.

For the consumer, online magazines are also more cost-effective. Whether it be good or bad, the swell of information online has caused many publications to offer their services free or at a minimal price. Why pay \$6.95 for a print magazine when a consumer can access the online version for a fraction of the cost. Besides, many readers, especially in the younger sector, would prefer reading something online rather than let old magazines pile up in their homes. Yet print magazines survive, due in large part to a familiarity with the medium. Besides, the term “curling up with a good book” or in this case magazine, just doesn’t translate to the world of new media.

Postage is another cost print magazines are constantly fighting. As postage rates continue to rise on a regular basis, it becomes increasingly expensive to mail publications to subscribers. To that effect, as more consumers turn online, postage rates will spike

even higher just to be able to survive in the trend toward a paperless society.

The U.S. Postal Service has also been in negotiations over changes in format requirements which especially affect publishers. By late 2008, there will be a significant change to mailing label formatting as well as address labels (Pettas, Folio). In this way, it would supposedly be easier for mail carriers to read and scan mail passing through at high speeds. Not only is this annoying to publishers, though, it also poses a design problem. Many publishers will have to reconsider cover layout which might involve costly redesigns.

The Publishing Environment Today

There are some that believe that in the not-so-distant future, the argument between print and new media will be irrelevant, because print will have ceased to exist. For example, Adam L. Penenberg of *Media Post* comments on what he considers the inevitable death of print media:

Print as a medium will ultimately fade away, just as parchment became paper, the typewriter gave way to the pc, and the waxed cylinder morphed into the record, then the compact disc, and now the digital download. The first to go will be newspapers, but over time magazines and even books will follow. And not only will they be distributed digitally (read: without paper), and accessed through a variety of devices - some mobile, some not - they will most likely be free. Not this year or next, maybe not even within the span of a decade, but surely in our lifetime. Your trusty copy of *The New York Times* that stains your hands with ink, your *Vanity Fair* with Leo DiCaprio on the cover, your dog-eared copy of the bestseller *Skinny Bitch* will all become museum pieces, bought and sold on eBay as collectibles, or tossed into landfills.

Penenberg makes a good point as far as technology: it continues to shift forward, never a backward glance. It leaves in its wake vinyl records, black and white televisions, even portable CD players. Will magazines join the ranks of the nostalgic and archaic? Not necessarily. Just because the technology exists does not mean it will become the only option. Even though a person can now order his groceries online and have them delivered straight to his door, most people still prefer the experience of pushing a real cart down an

actual aisle. There are simply some acts that cannot be duplicated. Yet there are still disturbing trends that seem directly propagated by the rise of new media. For example major newspapers have literally lopped off some of their trim size to reduce paper costs (the Wall Street Journal dropped three inches!) However, this means less news (10 percent less in the case of the Journal), which, to a media which already cannot compete with the amount of online information, is much like a death sentence. There are some theorists that believe that in only a few years time all media will be delivered digitally. (Penenberg, Media Post).

Drawbacks to Online Publishing

There are of course a number of drawbacks to new media in general. As opposed to the saying “less is more,” users are being bombarded by overdose levels of text, audio and video. So many stimuli reduce the ability to concentrate on only a few things, and tend to propagate an ADD-driven society, one whose attention can’t be held longer than the span of an average commercial (or about two minutes).

A considerable loss of privacy is another major issue. Being able to track user activity is wonderful for advertisers and statisticians, but for many people the internet is beginning to resemble Big Brother watching their every click. With the growing technology, advertisers will ideally be able to anticipate consumers’ needs and recommend products and sites to them. This runs the risk of a sort of “brainwashing,” telling people what they *really* want.

Matthew Milne of *Juli B* also cites another problem with new media, especially one that sends out newsletter emails like *Julib.com*. “You never know if you’re getting to your market. You can send out half a million [emails] a week, but if an internet server

like *Yahoo* goes down, they won't be delivered. Plus, you don't know if people will even open it, or if it will go in their junk pile." In contrast, print magazines have an advantage in this area. The odds are, if somebody buys a magazine, he will read it rather than waste his money. So in a sense, it can be easier to track what is actually read in print than in emails.

In addition, the competition between publications, one of the main reasons for the online push, is becoming just as extreme among new media. Not only do print magazines have to fight with one another and now with their online counterparts, but online publications must compete with one another. Besides that, with the torrent of information flooding the web, it becomes increasingly difficult to discern accurate information from bad information and *Wikipedia* syndrome.

There are many big names still in favor of print, such as Jann Wenner. Heading up *Rolling Stone*, *US Weekly*, and *Men's Journal*, he is one of the last major magazine magnates with a minimal presence online. For example, until 2006 the web page of *US Weekly* simply consisted of a subscription coupon. (Fine, *Business Week*). Like Wenner, these defenders of print tout the traditional virtues a computer cannot replicate. For one, magazines have a long shelf life, and the experience of carrying around and reading a magazine at home, on the subway, or wherever, is not easily manufactured online. Although the news magazines may be the hardest hit right now, print publications like *The New Yorker* and *Vanity Fair* continue to gain revenue. Also, magazines are a source of identification for many. One can look at a person reading *Rolling Stone* and be able to tell something about them. Plus, many a dorm wall would not be the same if not plastered with torn-out magazine photos.

The Citizen Journalist

The move to the internet has also created a new category of reporter, the citizen journalist (McKean, Mr. Magazine). This is both a good and a bad development. On the one hand, it becomes more difficult to hire professional online journalists with everyone wanting to try their hand at writing. These new breed of amateurs are delivering low-quality content in huge amounts. Yet, the overarching benefit to this ilk is that with the number of people participating, they can be everywhere all the time. Stories become timelier with people around right as the action unfolds. For example, citizen journalism came noticeably into play during hurricane Katrina and the Virginia Tech shootings (McKean).

The Ezine

The first recorded ezines include Dargonzone and Cult of the Dead Cow, both started in 1984, back when computers were limited and the internet was in its nascent stage. However, by 2002 when *Juli B* was started, ezines had begun to solidify an established place in the media and online. As technology continues to improve, ezines become more complex and interactive for the reader. For example, many ezines mimic print magazines by having readers being able to “turn” virtual pages with the click of their mouse.

Still, many publications, especially luxury publications were, and still remain, reluctant to make the switch online. Former *Juli B* advertising director Jodi Newhall explains. “Most luxury brands aren’t online yet. The new medium is scary to them.” Even with the huge success of online advertising as a new consumer market, many companies prefer to stick with tried and true methods (i.e. print) and are not willing to throw a large

sum into a new investment. Yet as they continue to test the waters, other emboldened companies are jumping in and snatching up precious ad space and customers.

It is interesting to also compare an established print magazine with its online division. Take *Vogue* for example. The quintessential magazine has grown to be the ultimate fashion bible for women throughout the world since its beginnings at the turn of the nineteenth century. Their website follows much in the same vein, although it falls under the umbrella site *style.com*. What sets the website apart from the print version are a few things. First off, interaction with the reader exists where it does not otherwise, in the form of polls, surveys, and reader blog comments. Second of all, the depth of information increases in the online forum. There can be more information on the website regarding a story run by the print magazine, as well as links for the reader to where they can, for example, buy a specific item. It can also be more up to the minute on fashion happenings as on their news and trends page than the print magazine which comes out on a monthly basis only. Finally, it also comprises a video section featuring among other things, footage from runway shows. For the most part, these offshoots of print magazines are run by a separate staff, although there is a large amount of crossover, especially in regards to the recurrence of print features online.

The Luxury Magazine

Some may wonder what exactly a luxury magazine is. It is a publication that appeals to the affluent part of the society, or those people who aspire to be affluent. In this way, the audience can be very broad and consist of upwards of a million readers. The content of the magazines usually deal with top tier fashion designers, real estate, expensive cars, vacations, and luxury goods like watches and jewelry. All of this is

reflected in both editorial and advertising content. Because this type of magazine caters to a niche audience, it is usually not as readily available on newsstands. More often, as in the case of *Juli B*, circulation is controlled or heavily dependent on subscriptions, which may be paid or unpaid. The concept of the luxury magazine is relatively recent.

SmartLife, Great Britain's first luxury publication was just launched in 2000. So while the rich have existed since ancient times, it has been less than a decade for publishers to tap into their specific market, a market that consequently spends a lot of money on high-end goods.

My Internship Experience

Working at an ezine for nine months was a unique experience, but becoming ever more common, as more ezines pop up all the time, each honing in on a specific demographic. *Juli B*, for one, is an entirely online, self-described "luxury/lifestyle" magazine. While there is a permanent website, most subscribers prefer the biweekly emails they receive, either on their computer or mobile device. Started at home in 2002 by publisher Julie Benlevi Zeff, the readership has grown from 400 to over half a million readers today worldwide. Zeff, a local social butterfly with all the right connections, wanted to impart her knowledge of the hip side of New York, and as controller Matt Milne adds, "Her friends wanted to know where to go." And the internet seemed the most viable (and affordable option). Milne goes on to comment about the timeliness benefit offered online, "With print, there's leave time before publication. This is in real time. It's easier to get your point across." It also seemed, in the wake of the technology boom, the right time to act.

I began interning in October 2007. Then, only 7 people total, including myself, worked in the office, though as the magazine expands and merges with Modern Luxury Magazines, Zeff plans to bring more on board. Yet for the five years it had been around, the staff at *Juli B* never grew too big. Although there are a number of regular contributing writers, finding content and writing features was a daunting task. I would come to call Miami in particular “my Everest” for the difficulty in finding new stories there. But since I was the only intern, I was excited to get a hands-on experience, especially after hearing the tales of interns being nothing more than glorified coffee runners.

For awhile, I only did writing for the magazine. Features could be about anything from a new restaurant, boutique, spa, or hotel opening, to a fashion item or home good. There is also the monthly picks which consisted of five or six hot things going on that month in each city. There is also monthly eats, which cover buzz on the dining scene for the upcoming month. In any case, it was tricky to find something hip that would appeal to the affluent demographic and also the publisher, while trying to make it as timely as possible. (They try to keep within a 2 week window of when a location opens.) Even then, the magazine would sometimes get scooped by the competition (*Daily Candy*) or else, as I came to find when I began editing pieces, the writers would not abide to such a strict time frame. Additionally, there simply were not that many regular writers working for the company, and even some of the most prolific would sometimes not turn in a story, and we would have to scramble to write something ourselves. However, I saw my skills improve the more I wrote and came to understand the house style, which is conversational in tone. As Jeannette put it, “It’s like if you were telling your girlfriends about something.” Even as my writing improved, it was often frustrating to find different

information for every city. This became even more trying when the new Atlanta, Philadelphia, and Washington DC editions were launched earlier this year.

When I began editing and proofreading, I learned the more technical side to the in-house style. This meant word count, conciseness, what to italicize, and what to bold. At first Jeannette would send me only final copy to look over for last minute grammatical errors, but eventually she would send me the rough copy straight from the contributing writers. And it was rough. It was not until then that I realized exactly how much work went into the editing side. Most writers did not stick to the format, or else I would have to find a cross-street that was left out, or add in another “pick” to make it the desired six in total. Often I would practically rewrite a piece. Also, as I would have to look for missing information, I began to find more and more incorrect information and names misspelled, so I would have to do fact-checking as well. In all, it amounted to more work than actually writing the piece myself from scratch.

Now, as I start to look for other opportunities in the field of publishing, I am grateful for the experience afforded me. I received an in-depth look at how a smaller magazine publisher works. More importantly, with the direction technology is going, what with all the online media editions, it’s a very marketable accomplishment to have on my resume.

Juli B

Juli B is a free newsletter with most issues sent out biweekly. There is also a permanent website for the stories which also acts as an archive to older features. The biweekly editions are as follows: New York (launched in 2002), Los Angeles (2005), Miami (2006), London (2006), Chicago (2006), San Francisco (2006), Boston (2007),

Paris (2007), Dallas (2007), Philadelphia (2008), Washington D.C. (2008), and Atlanta (2008). In summer, there is a Hamptons issue, launched in 2004, as well as a year-round weekly travel edition first launched in 2002. *Juli B* also participated in a photo campaign entitled “Gloss” featuring photos of model Angie Everheart and sponsored by Rioja wines. The gloss edition is also available on the website, and it is designed to look like a print magazine with pages that “turn.” Rioja, consequently, is one of *Juli B*’s biggest and most long-time advertiser, and Zeff diligently organized a tasting for them at the end of June. In true *Juli B* style, it entailed fiery Latin music, Manolo Blahnik shoes, and enviable gift bags.

Juli B readers are described as young affluent women who love to shop, or at least those who dream of one day affording the luxury items described therein. Some demographics include the following: 31.7% of readers are between the ages of 26-30; 88.1% of them are female; 65.2% are single; 75.1% of readers have an undergraduate degree or better; the average household annual income for 27% of readers is \$50,000-75,000, with a close 26% pulling in \$75,000-125,000 a year. These figures point to a portrait of a young, single, educated woman with load of money to burn. It sounds a bit like the women from *Sex and the City*.

Daily Candy

When looking to *Juli B* it is impossible not to look at its direct competitor, *Daily Candy*. Often compared in scope and tone, the two publications do indeed hold a number of similarities. Yet they exist and thrive, in part because they contest to cater to a *slightly* different reader, but also owing to the sheer amount of information available and number of online readers to be reaped. This is of course idealistic in scope, and there is readership

crossover, hence the cutthroat competition and oft comparisons between the two.

Daily Candy is also a free newsletter and website, though most issues are e-mailed daily. Daily editions include New York, launched in 2000, Los Angeles (2001), Chicago (2004), San Francisco (2004), Boston (2004), Dallas (2005), London (2005), Washington D.C. (2005), Atlanta (2006), Philadelphia (2006), Miami (2006), and Seattle (2006). It doesn't stop there. There is also an "Everywhere" edition which covers mostly new products, as well as a local weekly Kids edition for "busy and hip parents." There is also a weekly Travel section, Daily Candy Deals which features local promotions and sales, and special editions including, but not limited to, health, holidays, and weddings.

The magazine describes itself as the "insider's guide to what's hot, new and undiscovered—from fashion and style to gadgets and travel." The style of writing is very conversational, in fact very similar to that of *Juli B*, i.e. very tongue in cheek and abundant with word play. Similarly, features are short, ranging in general from 150-200 words. The publication was created in 2000 by Dany Levy who had become sick of the slower lead times of print magazines.

Among the 2.6 million subscribers, some other general reader demographics include the following: 95% of readers are female; 64% are under the age of 35, whereas the median age is 31; 92% are college graduates or higher; the median household annual income is \$75,000; 34% are single, 29% partnered, and 36% are married. These figures are similar to those in *Juli B*, with a couple of key differences. Though the average age is the same, more *Daily Candy* readers are married, and since they have a Kid's issues where *Juli B* does not, it makes perfect sense. On top of that, the average HHI is slightly lower, which is reflected in their content. Though *Daily Candy* also covers extravagant

vacation spots and luxurious products, they also include deals and sample sale listings, which is entirely absent from *Juli B*. See Fig. 1.1 for a detailed comparison.

Benefits of the Ezine

Ever since choosing the career of the world’s Anna Wintours and David Remnicks, I dreamt of some day becoming senior editor of *Vogue* or the *New Yorker*. Now, it seems like a more logical goal to strive to become senior editor of the *New Yorker online*. Online publishing is here to stay, and one major issue in the workforce affecting this trend is the number of employees a publication can afford to keep on.

With the growing popularity of online magazines and the rise of production costs, print publications, especially newspapers have been hit hard. And like any business faced with a loss in profits, the big “D” word (downsizing, that is) always seems to show up.

	SITE STATS	TYPICAL READER	YOU’LL LIKE IT IF . . .	YOU WON’T IF . . .	MY TAKE
DAILYCANDY.COM	Started in 2000 by former New York magazine staffer Dany Levy. Now has 2.5 million subscribers and 21 editions, including Kids, Travel and Everywhere. The D.C. edition, which is e-mailed to more than 70,000 subscribers five days a week, launched in 2005.	A young woman with money to burn. She’s all about getting her shop on, be it sample sale or Saks. Readers “love to be in the know, are actively engaged in their communities, and compulsively spread the word,” Pete Sheinbaum, the company’s chief executive, wrote in an e-mail.	You want an insider’s take on what’s new in the city. Whether it’s a chic boutique, the latest dive bar or the book that will be in everyone’s beach bag, DailyCandy has the dish — often before anyone else.	You lack the patience to navigate the site’s peppy, often nonsensical prose: “You’ve knitted gloves for your favorite bouncer and crafted mix tapes for your Metro bus driver. You like to reward those who support you. So show some love to a pal who never lets you down: your chair.” This is for a story about an aerobics class.	A little too cutesy. But I still get it anyway.
JULI B.COM	Started in 2002 by Juli Benlevi-Zeff. Now has more than 1 million subscribers and 14 editions, Paris, the Hamptons and Travel among them. The D.C. edition, which is e-mailed to about 20,000 subscribers twice a week, launched in January.	A young woman with even more money to burn. Lobster carpaccio? Sure, she’s tried it. Valentine’s Day in Turks and Caicos? She went back in 2003, dahling. “Some people say Juli B readers have graduated from DailyCandy,” Benlevi-Zeff says.	You want to spend five minutes every Tuesday and Thursday dreaming about a life that includes gourmet crepes, La Perla lingerie and spas off the shores of Lake Geneva. “Everything has a certain quality to it,” Benlevi-Zeff says, and who would disagree?	You’ve lived in Washington longer than a year. The D.C. edition has no local full-time staffers, and it shows in odd references to “the Beltway” and tourism-board-type pronouncements such as “great style clearly exists in the nation’s capital.” (Want to check it out after we visit the Lincoln Memorial, Grandma?)	A little too posh. But I still get it anyway.

Fig 1.1 (courtesy of Suzanne d'Amato, *Washingtonpost.com* 2008)

The question then becomes, "How many people have to read a story before it goes in the paper? (Mutter, *Newsosaur*)" Out of necessity, print publications employ a larger number of staff than do their colleagues online. Granted, an ezine like *Juli B* offers less text and images than, say, *Vogue*, but the scope (that is, the variety of information covered) is comparable. *Juli B* carries features about anything from travel destinations, to new restaurants and hotels, to hot beauty and fashion products, and more. To boot, a different issue goes out to each of the 14 cities each time. All the articles, whether written by a contributor or in-house, is reviewed by only the managing and associate editors. In contrast, print magazines like *Essence* have a health editor, a beauty editor, a music editor, and so on. In addition, many online magazines, especially blogs, gather their information secondhand from primary sources including print magazines. In effect, this means that John Q. Blog Writer has a world of information at his fingertips that he can sort through and deliver to the reader by means of skimming off of the labor of others. In doing so, he (like the publishing newsletter writer Bo Sacks for example) need not employ an extended work force.

Disadvantages of the Ezine

However, despite its benefits, this new information platform is not without issues. One problem became apparent with ezines early on. Jennifer Reed of *Wee Ones Magazine*, another ezine, explains that people started out not taking them seriously. Indeed, many people remain skeptical of ezines being on the same level of authenticity and overall enjoyment as print magazines. Reed also went on to say that money was a

major issue. Unlike *Juli B*, which is entirely advertisement driven, *Wee Ones* opted to omit advertising from their pages. This meant having to find revenue elsewhere. Asking money for subscriptions was out of the question. Because of the nature of the internet, users expect information to be free. Whether that information is true poses another problem, but it is attached to a “users beware” theory. Thus, few people would choose subscribing to a paid online magazine when they can surf the internet and acquire the information they desire at no cost. In this way, ezines will always lose to print magazines, on which, printed on tangible pieces of paper, people seem more willing to spend money. For *Wee Ones* this meant a lot of out of pocket expense, and the magazine eventually folded.

An Advertiser’s Market

It is a natural phenomenon that advertisers chase their audience, and the internet is no exception. To companies wanting to advertise with an online publication, the appeal of this new media is undeniable. For one, with most online magazines offering free access to readers, advertisements consequently get more clicks. Of course, there are those opponents who offer the argument that, while basic television channels are free, cable is not. Yet, the internet is much more uncontrollable than television (save the few entrepreneurs who pirate free cable), and with the aim of driving more traffic to sites, advertisers are willing to pay a pretty penny for the kind of exposure which outweighs the pass-along readership of print. It is estimated that advertisers will pay \$27.5 billion next year, while print advertising continues to decline (Quinton, Direct Mag). Advertising has exploded this year, 28 percent up from last year, with advertisers paying on average \$200 per user.

Statistics and demographics are also much easier to come by. Whereas with a print publication it could take months to get exact figures, online statistics have the luxury of offering quicker, up to date numbers, such as the return on investments (ROI). It is much simpler to track and also harder to fudge the results than print figures, which can take months to get accurate numbers.

Online investors also have the ability to gain a more detailed account of viewer demographics. By tracking which other sites users are visiting, advertisers can not only paint a more accurate picture of those users, but also anticipate their needs.

So it seems despite the wariness that ezines can be successful. And it is not just editorial magazines jumping on the bandwagon. Some advertisers are skipping the magazine middlemen altogether and sending out their own newsletters (O'Dell, *promomagazine.com*). Large and small companies alike, like Dairy Queen, are now sending out privileged information to subscribers through email. Readers gain inside knowledge of a product (like when the newest ice cream flavor will be coming out) while the company in essence has users that subscribe to their advertising. In a way, it is like having a television channel with just commercials, but proves that if the commercials are packaged just right, they will appeal to consumers. This turns out to be fantastic news for those companies. Ezines are one way to communicate with an interested audience, and send out promotions. Companies will no longer need to rely on a third party, like a newspaper or radio spot in promoting their products, which will save on money and paper. However, there is still some give and take in the consumer-producer relationship. If a user subscribes to a company's newsletter, thereby opening him to the idea of being marketed to, he should receive something in return. In the case of Dairy Queen, readers

began demanding (and rightfully so) discounts. Companies, who until then did not have to buy the cow since they were getting the advertising milk for free, soon realized they would have to comply with these demands.

However, this relationship also benefits both parties. Interaction between companies and targeted users allows for consumer feedback for improvements. The customer then has a say, while the company can make adjustments based on actual consumer testimony.

Building a subscription base is not always easy, though. Companies may first have to advertise through the third parties they would come to bypass. For example, Sephora first ran an ad in *Oprah* magazine advertising its new online newsletter (O'Dell, *promomagazine.com*). Relatively new social networking sites like Facebook and Myspace are also being looked into to target demographics, but this method is still in infant stages since the networking sites themselves are a relatively recent phenomena. Other tried and true methods include doing basic searches and purchasing subscription lists from other publications and information data services.

By having subscribers, like *Juli B* does, publishers have a controlled audience. This is a great way to build up a loyal readership, for unlike print magazines, ezines do not experience the pass-along effect of print in which one copy of a magazine passes amongst friends. Rather, it is more about word of mouth and reaching the audience en masse. From a marketing standpoint, having subscribers gives advertisers a specific demographic to sell to, and allows them insight into what interests users, via tracking click through rates, websites visited, and reader surveys. It also allows the publisher close, mutually beneficial relationships with affiliated websites and advertisers.

The profits earned by the company rely entirely on outside advertisers. This gives the magazine more freedom editorially, but a strong need to attract and retain potential clients. In order to keep up technologically and be able to appeal to investors, that means offering click-thru capabilities and an instant return ROI. This latter point has revolutionized all media. Rather than relying on field reps, crunching numbers and making endless phone calls as in the past, all tracking on sales (whether it be for a book or magazine) can be computed instantaneously online.

Like *Juli B*, *Daily Candy* is supported entirely by advertising profits. As many publishers are finding, the online world of advertising is completely different than its print counterpart. Consumers are much less likely to want to pay for online services like they are willing to pay for a print magazine. However, advertisers go where the market goes, and the market is making a mad dash to the internet.

Niche Demographics

The online media question also applies to certain niche demographics. With the detailed information websites can gain about their users, there have been some interesting findings among certain groups of people. For example, it has been found that surprisingly many of the business elite (mostly middle-aged males) are heavy new media users. (Mandese, Media Post). Whereas most people do not associate the older generations born well before the technological revolution with being so invested in the internet, studies have found that the business elite are heavily engaging in blogs and podcasts. In fact, growth of these types of users is higher than the general population turning to the web.

The rate of Hispanic online readers has also ballooned. The online population, especially among young bilingual Hispanics, grew 13 percent last year as opposed to the

2 percent growth of the general population. Also noted is that Hispanics tend to spend more time online (88.1 minutes versus the average 81.7 minutes per day than the average user (Dawley, Media Life). Obviously, this is great news for advertisers who are voraciously pursuing this demographic.

The Future of New Media: RSS Feeds

One prediction for the future of ezines revolves around RSS feeds. RSS, which refers to real simple syndication, is a type of web feed format that is used frequently in updating blogs, new sites, and podcasts. Also, called a channel, RSS feeds allow information from an affiliated site to be piped in, so users can keep up on information in an automated manner. The benefit of this system is being able to collect various strands of information online onto one site in real time. A subscribed reader will have the added benefit that the RSS reader will be able to automatically check and update content onto a user's browser as new information becomes available. This type of format has been around since the late 1990s, although earlier attempts at different types of syndication were made.

However, there are still bugs to be worked out. One problem posed by RSS feeds is the issue of compatibility. Feeds are usually coded in XML format, so problems arise when one tries to convert to HTML. And like so many other technological advances, RSS is incompatible with most earlier versions of feeds, rendering older versions archaic and defunct.

Yet Ken Hill of *pixelfriendly.com* is optimistic about RSS in relation to ezines. One benefit he states is the ability to "completely bypass the email filters that cause many ezines to lose their profitability." Equally crucial is that publishers will have complete

control over the content on their sites, and users will never be lost with changes of email addresses.

Conclusion

So what will *Juli B* subscribers be reading in 20 years? Sad to say, they will most likely not be clutching weathered copies of *Reader's Digest*. Those days of nostalgia look to have passed. Online magazines it seems are here to stay, and even if print does not completely disappear, it will continue to diminish as the dominant medium. As future generations are born into household with computers, they will use this technology from a younger age. We readers now are stuck in a technological schism. We have not grown up with this technology, but must scramble to keep up with it as it improves. Inventions like the iPhone, so foreign to those us of who remember when cell phones were the size of home phones, will literally become child's play. As the young shopoholic readers of *Juli B* progress into middle age and beyond, they may opt for *Oprah* and *AARP* online. Or rather, as is the more likely situation, *Juli B*, with its niche demographic and specialized information, will as a supplement to this voracious world of all things luxe, and cater to the woman who probably wades through stacks of *Elle* and *Vogue* on a daily basis. She is, and will remain, the unknowing poster child of this multimedia, multi-platform cooperation that has been the thorn in the side of the publishing magnate.

Thus, in the fight between online and print factions, it is the best course of action to side with both. The most logical answer to this quandary is not the dominance of one medium, but rather an integration, which can be advantageous to each camp. Milne realizes the value of this cooperation: "There needs to be a fluffing out. To reach a broader base and gain brand awareness, they [publishers] need to have a relationship with

each other.” Newhall agrees, claiming that with the way the digital environment is evolving, “they will need to integrate and work together.” This would entail a level of crossover insofar as advertising, content, and overall theme is concerned.

There has also been a substantial drop in television viewers in recent years which can be attributed to people going online more often. This shows that television would also benefit from integrated media. More and more, people are multitasking and using a variety of media at one time, so rather than compete for the senses, it is more logical for media to work with one another in order to achieve one common goal.

What this integration means in the editorial arena is a fleshing out of information in conjunction with the appropriate outlet. For example, someone can pick up a magazine, or pick up the remote and find an interesting story or show, then go online and find out more on the topic. Likewise, if someone reads something interesting online, they may want to buy the movie version or pick up a copy of the book or magazine, because people are collectors, and with the souvenir effect, desire to the real thing.

In the advertising realm, this means cross-cooperation. There needs to be online and offline ad campaigning that works in relation to one another. In doing so, users get the experience of interactive advertising coming at them from different angles and platforms. The goal, obviously, is that if someone is told something in a variety of ways, eventually one of those methods, consciously or not, will achieve desired effects.

What it boils down to in the end is a vital need for integration. It may even be print’s saving grace. Many people, though, do not believe print publications will ever become obsolete. “People need that hard copy; they need to hold something” (Milne). Also, most online newspapers like the *Washingtonpost.com* (knowledge@wharton),

although the trend shows this may change later, do not make enough revenue yet to completely support their print version. In the end, there are comparable advantages and disadvantages in this still alien realm, and new media can be an exciting and lucrative media if approached in the right way.

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